



U.S. CAPITOL

Visitor Center

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Exhibition of Civil War Treasures at U.S. Capitol Visitor Center

Capitol Visitor Center Exhibition Continues its Spotlight on Civil War History at the Capitol

WASHINGTON, DC – Beth Plemmons, CEO for the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, announced today that a new selection of Civil War-related documents and artifacts will be on display beginning March 12 through September 8, 2012, in the Capitol Visitor Center’s Exhibition Hall.

“We are pleased to present part two of our commemoration of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War by highlighting documents and artifacts that relate to the role of Congress and the Capitol during the Civil War,” said Plemmons.

Among the items featured is a copy of the DC Emancipation Act, on loan from the National Archives. This Act ended slavery in the District of Columbia nine months before the Emancipation Proclamation was issued. The legislation, signed by President Abraham Lincoln on April 16, 1862, freed nearly 3,000 people and included compensation to slave owners for lost property.

In 1865, Congress created the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, known as the Freedmen’s Bureau, to provide for the needs of displaced and formerly-enslaved persons. The Bureau’s actions included issuing hundreds of marriage certificates to couples denied the right to marry while enslaved. Also on loan from the National Archives is the marriage certificate of former slaves John and Emily Pointer who got married in October 1866, after the creation of the Freedmen’s Bureau.

Be sure to check out the new student self-guide of the Capitol Visitor Center’s Exhibition Hall and the Capitol Grounds called, “My Capitol.” The self-guide includes historical background, activities, and questions to encourage discussion during the tour or for follow-up at school or at home. Copies are available online or at the Visitor Center’s North Coat Check.

Visitors may prepare for their trip to the Capitol by going to the Capitol Visitor Center’s website, www.visitthecapitol.gov, where they can make an advance reservation to tour the U.S. Capitol. The website includes important logistical information that visitors need before they visit the U.S. Capitol, including the prohibited items list. Also featured on the website is an online exhibition where visitors may preview items in Exhibition Hall.

For more information about the Capitol Visitor Center, go to www.visitthecapitol.gov. For the latest developments, follow the Capitol Visitor Center on Twitter @visitthecapitol.

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